

UPDATE ON OROVILLE DAM

(Mr. LAMALFA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, well, it has been national news, the situation going on in northern California, where the Oroville Dam is. Obviously, there has been some damage and destruction to the main concrete spillway, as well as the situation with the lake rising and finally going for the first time in 48 years over the emergency spillway.

The dam itself, the earthen structure, 770 feet tall is solid. The emergency spillway is being evaluated, but so far it looks stable itself. It is the issue of the soil in front of it that needs to be stabilized during these days where there is dry weather, where it can be stabilized with rock and concrete.

So what we need to know is: Why did this happen?

This would be what we do later on. First, we need to take care of the emergency situation, the State resources and Federal resources pulling together to make sure people are safe and that the dam remains sound and that we don't lose the structure.

It looks good. I think things are stable for right now. We also need prayer for no more rain for a while, or at least not overwhelming amounts of rain. So it looks good.

We just need patience also from the people that are in the flood plain that have been evacuated to listen to their emergency personnel and follow with that so that they are kept safe during this time of the emergency.

So I think good efforts are underway, and we will investigate later on what went wrong.

COMMITMENT TO CIVILITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GALLAGHER). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JOHNSON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Louisiana?

There was no objection.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, today a bipartisan group of 46 freshman Members of this 115th U.S. Congress, representing red and blue States from coast to coast, released a document that we have entitled the "Commitment to Civility."

This evening, I am grateful to be joined on the floor by 21 different leaders of our class, representing diverse districts in 15 different States across

our great Nation to speak to this important and very timely issue.

This commitment document was created in early January following our initial meetings together as a class. We discussed our mutual intent to serve the best interest of the country, and to return to statesmanship that was revered and modeled by the great leaders of our history.

I drafted this document to memorialize our Members' agreement to, among other things, work towards restoring collegiality and civility in the Congress; encouraging more productive dialogue; and building consensus and strengthening the public's trust in America's institutions.

This document is not intended in any way as a criticism of anyone else in any other Chamber or branch of the government. Rather, it represents the mutual commitments of the Members of our class that we have made among and between ourselves.

As we teach our own children, we often have no control over what others may do, but we are ultimately responsible for our own actions. Personally, I want to say how encouraging it is to work with others from across the political spectrum who want to lead by example and work to restore civility in our public discourse. There may never have been a more important time for that very important effort.

I am one who is regarded as probably being among the most conservative Members of the Congress, and I will never deviate from my core principles. However, I am mindful to always remember that while some of my colleagues and I may have very different ideas and core political philosophies, at the end of the day, we are all Americans and we are all made in the image of God; thus, we believe we should act accordingly.

Before my esteemed colleagues come to share their thoughts on this important subject, I would like to introduce and read into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, the document we refer to as the "Commitment to Civility." It reads as follows:

"As new Members of the United States House of Representatives and as individual citizens we recognize the gravity of the responsibility we have been given and the significance of this moment in the history of our extraordinary country.

"America remains the most free, most powerful and most prosperous nation in all the world, and yet we face significant challenges. Among these challenges has been an increasing division in and coarsening of our culture fueled too often by the vitriol in our politics and public discourse. One result has been a loss of trust in our institutions and elected officials.

"We believe there is a better alternative.

"Although we represent both political parties and a wide range of individual views across the political spectrum, our common and sincere aims

are to serve the needs and interests of the American people, to work with one another and the leaders of our respective parties to encourage greater confidence in our institutions, and to set an example of statesmanship for the younger generation of Americans that will follow.

"To this end, we are dedicated to showing proper respect to one another and all others, encouraging productive dialogue, and modeling civility in our public and private actions. While we may vehemently disagree on matters of law and policy, we will strive at all times to maintain collegiality and the honor of our office.

"We believe that a leader can be cooperative and conciliatory without compromising his or her core principles, and we will remember that our political rivals in Congress are not our enemies—but rather our colleagues and fellow Americans. We also believe that maintaining a spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation will help make government work more efficiently and effectively, help build consensus and restore the public trust, and, ultimately, serve as a positive influence on society at large.

"For all of these reasons, we hereby pledge our names to this Commitment to Civility on this 10th day of January, 2017, in Washington, D.C."

The document is signed by 46 incoming Members of the 115th Congress.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I am delighted to yield to 21 different leaders of our class, representing both political parties and 15 different States across our great land. Each will express their own thoughts on this important subject.

I begin by yielding to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BARRAGÁN).

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, Congressman MIKE JOHNSON from Louisiana, for helping coordinate this effort.

When I got here to Washington for orientation, I will never forget very early on, one of my colleagues, Congressman JODEY ARRINGTON from Texas, came up to me and said: I want to introduce myself. And he did.

He was the first Republican that came up to me and said: I want to get to know you on a personal level. I want to be your friend because we are going to be working together.

I have to tell you how impressed I was that somebody was reaching out across the aisle because they wanted to develop a personal relationship, knowing that we would be able to work together.

Later on, I got to meet the rest of my colleagues at Harvard, where they have a bipartisan program that is a wonderful program and gives you an opportunity to help build these relationships, which I think is so important, especially today in our time.

We just got off one of the ugliest elections in history where it really felt as if civility disappeared. Today it

sometimes still feels that way, which is why I think this is such an important effort.

As Members of Congress, we need to set an example of statesmanship for younger generations of Americans to follow. We must remember that every person should be respected. Somebody yesterday said something that really struck a chord. It is not that we need to agree on everything or that we need to agree all the time, but we need to learn to disagree better.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BERGMAN).

□ 1700

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in support of the freshman class's commitment to civility.

Before the Revolutionary War, a 16-year-old George Washington copied 110 rules for civil behavior out of his school book. The last of Washington's rules of civility, as they are now called, is this: "Labor to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire called conscience."

Conscience: That should be our guide in everything we do, both here in Congress and back home—for me, in Michigan's First District. Conscience is why, as a Member of the freshman class of the 115th Congress, I have made a commitment to open and civil debate.

We are facing many challenges in our country. And the folks here and back in Michigan, all across the land, on both sides of the aisle, have many different ideas about where we need to be and what we need to do to get there. That is democracy at work.

Being civil means that the best and most effective ideas have a real chance to be heard. If we truly desire to move forward as a country, we have to do it together. We must treat each other with dignity and respect. We must be civil.

This freshman class has dedicated itself across party lines to setting the example for ourselves and for our colleagues here in Congress and for all of our constituents.

Mr. Speaker, I will uphold these standards, and I trust that my colleagues will also do the same.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I thank the general for his service to our country.

I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. SUOZZI).

Mr. SUOZZI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the freshman class's effort to encourage civility in this Chamber and in our political discourse generally.

Americans are divided. Hate speech and hate crimes are spiking. Fake news is increasing. Terrorism threatens the world, and 60 million refugees are displaced across the globe.

The public is convinced that elected officials don't seem to get much done regarding the shrinking middle class, immigration reform, climate change, gun violence, and a whole bunch more. What should we do?

Love thy neighbor: That may seem like a simplistic public policy prescription, but love thy neighbor is a concept that can be found across many traditions.

If we are going to get Republicans and Democrats to actually come together as people of goodwill in search of the common good, it is going to require us to rely on some shared principles.

Faith and religious beliefs are the most effective, existing sources of commonality that may be relied upon. If people of different political philosophies actually believed that their opponents were similarly motivated by a common set of values to love thy neighbor, I believe we would get a lot more talking and problem-solving and, yes, less yelling and screaming.

Even nonreligious Americans have a fundamental belief in the religion-based concept of love thy neighbor. Discussing issues civilly and rooted in shared faith and values will result in more good work being accomplished.

The good news is that, during the first 6 weeks, I found that many of my colleagues seemed genuinely inspired by their faith and their values. Maybe if we all agree to be civil and recognize that many of us here are motivated by the same command to love thy neighbor, we might be a little more effective.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GALLAGHER).

Mr. GALLAGHER. Mr. Speaker, I come from a place called Wisconsin. Besides having the world's best cheese and football franchise, we are known for being good neighbors. You may have heard of the phrase "Wisconsin nice." Well, that is a real thing, as any Bears or Lions or Vikings fans who have come to Lambeau Field and been greeted, not with jeers, but with a, welcome, it is good to have you have found out.

The disparity between how we do business in Wisconsin and how business gets done or doesn't in Washington, D.C., couldn't be wider. Well, I am of the humble opinion that the world needs more of what we do in Wisconsin and less of how Washington, D.C., traditionally operates.

At a time when politics seems more deeply divided than ever, further debased by an endless media cycle that rewards vitriol and scandal, at a time when faith in our basic institutions is diminishing, I think the overwhelming majority of the American people are looking for something better. They sent us here to fight for our ideas, not to demonize the other side in a cynical attempt to get on TV or fundraise. The American people voted against the politics of the past, which only seeks to divide us and stir up controversy.

We can do better. We must do better. That is why I salute all of my colleagues for joining in this effort. I believe we, the freshmen Members of the 115th Congress, can be different. I be-

lieve that, through working together, we can break through the politics of the past and offer something better for the American people. I believe we can prove there is still room for civil, serious discourse in our political system.

Now, a commitment to civility doesn't mean we are going to agree on everything. I suspect there will be legitimate battles ahead, but let it be a battle of ideas not political theater. I intend to come armed to that fight with all the weapons I have at my disposal, foremost among them, my fervent belief in my conservative ideas. And I don't expect to convert my Democratic friends, but I expect them to come armed with their ideas, and I intend to listen. In that process of serious debate, maybe—just maybe—we will learn something from one another and find ways to fix our Nation's problems together.

Imagine if we were able to do that. Well, I am looking forward to trying.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL).

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. Speaker, I too am honored to be part of the 115th Congress, the freshman class, a group of people who want to work together.

I think back to my campaign the last two years, and one of the most common concerns I had from people were: Why can't people in Congress get along? Why can't you respect each other?

What I saw day after day was the left and the right yelling at each other and the press throwing gasoline on top of that fire.

I remember, growing up, my dad had a saying: If you don't have something good to say about somebody, then don't say it. That is always something that I have taken to heart.

I think back to my sixth grade teacher, Mrs. Tyner. Her word for the entire year was "respect." She taught us to respect ourselves and respect each other, and that is what I would like to bring to the 115th Congress, is respect for each other, for each other's points of views, and never question someone's intentions or motivations.

I believe in iron sharpening iron and coming up with better ideas together. I believe in defining problems together, to talk about the problem, and then discuss solutions together.

The hope is that you and I, my friends across the aisle and down the aisle, together we can come up with better solutions for this country. I believe that national defense is not a Republican or a Democrat issue. I believe the economy is not a conservative or a liberal issue. I think these are American issues that we need to fight to make better. I certainly don't think that health care is a Republican or Democrat issue.

My pledge is to work with civility, to work with respect toward my colleagues across the aisle and down the aisle. I look forward to making America a better place to live.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. CARBAJAL).

Mr. CARBAJAL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recommit myself to work first and foremost for the interest of the American public, regardless of political ideology.

I am under no illusion about the overwhelming partisanship that permeates this Congress. But I believe that, as vigorously as we debate our policy differences, we should also commit to upholding the principles of civility and respect to encourage productive discourse. To this end, we must work together, when at all possible, to advance the policy that serves our constituents and our country.

In this effort, I reflect on my service in the United States Marine Corps. We did not first stop to question whether our fellow marine was a Democrat or a Republican. We counted on each other to protect and defend our country. That is the approach to service we should aspire to in this distinguished legislative body.

On the issues of national security and to provide for the needs of the American people, there is no doubt in my mind that there is more that unites us than divides us. I look forward to working with my colleagues here today to do just that.

In the infamous words of President Kennedy: "Let us not seek the Republican answer or the Democratic answer, but the right answer."

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BACON).

Mr. BACON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my fellow freshmen of the 115th Congress and commit to civility.

The 435 of us represent 320 million Americans. With a population that large and that diverse, we are going to have our differences. We are going to disagree which direction the Nation needs to go. With a free and open democracy, we all have that right. Vigorous discussion makes us stronger.

However, despite our differences, we are all still Americans, we want what is best for our country, and we must keep our debates respectful. We are all Americans first before we are Republicans, Democrats, Independents; and we can't forget this.

As Americans, we do have major issues facing us; and the world is looking to us to be leaders and find solutions. We must remain civil to each other to achieve this goal. Let's not forget that ISIS will never ask if we are Republicans or Democrats. The unemployment line doesn't ask if we are Republicans or Democrats either. The Federal deficit doesn't care if we are Republicans or Democrats. These are shared issues, and we are all in this together.

Politics is a contact sport, or so I am told. It has been that way since George Washington was President and Thomas Jefferson funded an opposition paper against him, all the while serving in

his Cabinet. Still, today, character assassinations are a common occurrence in our political landscape, and it is wrong. Americans are at our finest when we work toward our common goals respectfully.

I spent nearly 30 years in the Air Force, and, during that time, I was fortunate to hold five commands. It didn't matter to me or our mission if a subordinate or a teammate was a Republican or Democrat. We fought in Iraq, stood up missile defenses in Israel, and conducted missions worldwide as Americans, not as Republicans or Democrats.

In the Air Force, we were all Americans, we are all airmen, and we all had one common goal. We need more of that on Capitol Hill. We are all Americans, we are all Members of Congress, and we all care about the future of our country.

One day, like all of us, I will meet our Creator. And when I do, I believe He will not care about what political party I associated myself with, but He will care how I treated my brothers and sisters. Let us agree to be a bright light on how to treat each other while we debate the issues we care about.

Let us, in the 115th Congress, all agree to work together, be civil to each other, be respectful with each other, and remember we are Americans before we are Republicans or Democrats.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. PANETTA).

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JOHNSON) for this opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to discuss our commitment to civility, a promise that I have made to my constituents at home and a promise that I have made to my colleagues here in Washington, D.C.

Prior to my being sworn in, during my campaign of 2016, the number one question I heard and I received from the people in my district on the Central Coast of California was: Why would you want to go to Washington, D.C., right now?

I heard that over and over and over. I heard that people were dissatisfied with the dysfunction in Congress. I heard that they were disgusted with the partisanship of Congress. I heard that they were disheartened with our system of government. And I believe that it is that sentiment that lent to the denouement of November 8.

I admit I was disappointed by the Presidential election, and I believe that partisanship that was displayed during that election continued in Washington, D.C. It started when I got here for new Member orientation.

When we got here as freshmen, Republicans and Democrats, we were automatically split up. I did not get to know my fellow freshmen Republican colleagues here in D.C. It wasn't until we went on to Boston and Virginia that we actually took time to get to know each other, where they are from, and what they were about.

What I can tell you—the thing that I say that gives hope to so many people—is that my freshman class heard the exact same things during this past election: That it is time that we get things done and that we do it together.

Now, I believe that once we get past these turbulent times at this point, I do hope we can work together on issues that affect our country, be it immigration reform, investment in our infrastructure, and ensuring that our health care is not just accessible but affordable.

□ 1715

But I also realize, as many of you, that that is easier said than done. Yet I believe that to get things done in Congress, you have to treat it like a marathon and not a sprint, and I believe that we begin this race by building relationships.

My predecessor, Congressman Sam Farr, spent 23 years representing the place I call home on the central coast of California. He will tell you that for most of that time he was in the minority, yet he was able to get numerous things done; and he will tell you that the way he was able to do it is by relationships, with Democrats and Republicans.

I can tell you that Sam's predecessor would say the exact same thing; and I can tell you that Sam's predecessor and his three roommates, whom I was able to live with back in the eighties, would all say the same thing, that it is the personal chemistry amongst people here in Washington, D.C., that will lead to our ability to compromise professionally. That is what we must develop.

That is why I am honored and pleased to enter into this commitment of civility, for that is the first ingredient to that chemistry that we must strive for. And I believe that this commitment that we have all taken to each other, to our communities, and to our country, that will lead to our constituents' confidence, not just in Congress, but in our democracy.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. LEWIS).

Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join in this commitment to civility.

First off, I want to thank all of my freshmen colleagues on both sides of the aisle for participating today and going through the orientation and getting to know one another. It was a wonderful experience. I had the pleasure of talking with many of them over the last few weeks, and they share many of the same goals as I do, as this entire body does.

I agree with many of my colleagues on many issues. I can safely say I also disagree with some of them on a few issues. But while we may disagree, we do not assume that they are acting in bad faith. Rather than dismiss those who disagree with us, we must use that disagreement to challenge ourselves to be better.

You see, this process isn't easy, and addressing the issues our Nation is facing isn't easy either. In fact, I would argue, our ability to get things done, why we were sent here, rests on the ability to participate in productive political dialogue and discourse.

So substituting sincere communication, honest debate with grandstanding or a political ambush or shouting louder than somebody else is too clever by half, and it will not get the things done that we need to get done. Shouting louder than your neighbor doesn't accomplish anything other than silencing your neighbor. In fact, that is not progress; that is an affront to free speech and the ability to listen to all of those around us. It doesn't help, when we shout over each other, help you understand your neighbor's beliefs, and it doesn't help your neighbor understand your beliefs.

Now, I am reminded of this quote that gets used all too often these days: While I disapprove or might disapprove of what you say, I will defend to the death your right to say it.

So we may disagree with each other, we may even disapprove of what somebody else says, but it is important to know, it is always important to let each other say it. Freedom of speech is not limited to the loudest among us; it is a right afforded to all of us.

Of course, this commitment to civility doesn't mean we don't believe in the essence of free speech or the right and necessity to disagree with one another. We will. It simply means that we will do it in way that respects the rights of everyone. We believe, and so should those who oppose our policies, that the right to speak also entails the right to be heard.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. TENNEY).

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address our commitment to civility.

Let me quote: "Civility is not a tactic or a sentiment. It is the determined choice of trust over cynicism, of community over chaos." President George W. Bush spoke these words at his first inaugural address in 2001. It was a time for new beginnings then, and it is a time for new beginnings now.

I cannot think of a more well-intentioned way to begin the 115th Congress than to join my awesome freshman class, from both sides, in committing to work together civilly to unify and further strengthen our great Nation. Through this commitment, we promise to put people before politics, to thoughtfully advocate for the needs of our communities, and to renew confidence and trust in our political system. Although we may disagree on a number of issues, this commitment we make to each other today ensures that we will work together to always promote a positive and constructive discourse in our critically important work as representatives of the American people.

This job is not about any one of us individually, but about the hundreds of thousands of people we represent throughout our districts. As a Representative of the people's House, we are expected to provide positive leadership, a strong voice, and to set the example for the American people.

The ability to agree to disagree and to voice our differences is a critical part of the unique freedoms we cherish as Americans, but we must always do so respectfully. Malicious discourse is a disservice to those who risked their lives to fight for our freedoms and everything that our great Nation stands for.

It is truly unfortunate that the tone of political discourse throughout our Nation has become so contentious and hostile. It is detrimental to fostering an open and productive dialogue and the unity of our Nation. The commitment our class makes today solidifies this promise to work together peacefully to provide leadership and inspiration to the American people, while further promoting the freedoms and individual rights that make our Nation the greatest in the world.

We must look at 2017 positively, as a time for new beginnings. In the wake of new leadership, we are provided with a new opportunity for a fresh start and the chance to advance our shared mission of putting the American people first. It is my hope that the efforts of our great freshman class today, which, I argue, could be one of the greatest of this august body's history, will inspire people throughout the Nation to turn toward civility and to always treat each other with respect, despite our differences.

I thank my freshman colleagues who have all accepted—almost all have accepted—this particular commitment, and I especially would like to thank the gentleman from Louisiana for leading us on this very important issue.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Delaware (Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER).

Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to add my voice to the chorus of new Members of the 115th Congress.

It is fitting that we make this commitment on Valentine's Day. It is a holiday to show appreciation and also love, and I think that is what this is really about. It is about our love for our country and our love for our friends and families and neighbors.

It is also about civility, and to me, civility is not about the what. We can all disagree on the what. Civility is about the how. It is about our tone. It is about our tenor. It is about the words that we choose to use, and it is about respect.

As freshmen, our class is special. I feel we are special. Just like Claudia said, we are actually awesome. And it was really telling that, at one of our retreats, orientations, we came together and we asked if we could just be alone, no staff, no one else in the

room—just us. We actually said: Let's try to find common ground. Who here has a port? Who here has served in public life? Again, our goal wasn't to find ways to divide, but to find ways to come together.

If we expect civility from others, including our children, then we need to model it. Our signatures on this document show our commitment to civility, to caring, and, most of all, to getting things done. That is what America wants, and that is what America deserves.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SMUCKER).

Mr. SMUCKER. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to represent the people of Pennsylvania's 16th Congressional District and to serve the community in which I grew up.

I was very pleased a few months ago to come to Washington and join the new Member orientation. It was a great opportunity for all of us to meet our new colleagues on both sides of the aisle; and I must say, as has already been mentioned, I was impressed.

As we got to know one another and talk about our vision for this upcoming Congress, we all agreed we wanted to work together as much as possible. We decided we wanted to work to find common ground.

Today, across Pennsylvania and across America, finding common ground between Republicans and Democrats looks and sounds nearly impossible. We here in Congress may disagree on the issues, we may disagree on the solutions, but that is good. That is good because the purpose of this Chamber is to be a deliberative body. It is good because, collectively, we represent a wide range of issues across the political spectrum—we are supposed to—and, in fact, we are even expected to disagree, but we must always do so in a civil and respectful manner.

We must understand that, while we may disagree on the issues and solutions, we share, all of us, the common goal of serving our constituents and of improving their lives. We must understand that just because we may disagree with one another, that doesn't mean the other side is un-American or out to get us.

Arthur Brooks, President of the American Enterprise Institute, calls this "political motive asymmetry." Brooks says: "A majority of people in our country today who are politically active believe that they are motivated by love but the other side is motivated by hate."

Now, I know I might disagree with some of my colleagues, but I can tell you, they are not motivated by hate. If we are to be successful in this Chamber and in discussions in our communities across the country, we must rid our discourse of this political motive asymmetry. Then we will be able, together, to find solutions more easily to the problems that we face.

I am hopeful that our freshman class, along with the rest of our colleagues on

both sides of the aisle, will be able to do what is stated in our commitment to civility: “make the government work more efficiently and more effectively, help build consensus and restore public trust, and, ultimately, serve as a positive influence on society at large.”

We here in Congress are charged with an enormous task. In today’s divisive and heated public discourse, we must be an example to our constituents by showing respect for one another at all times.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. KHANNA).

Mr. KHANNA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the freshman initiative on civility. I thank Congressman JOHNSON for his leadership.

I want to echo the remarks of Congressman SUOZZI and Congresswoman BLUNT ROCHESTER about getting things done. We have disagreements on many issues. I don’t think I voted with the Republicans on almost any issue since I have been in this body. On economic issues, I come from a perspective of economic populism and a very different perspective than Members on the other side.

But we also have areas of common agreement. Congressman GALLAGHER and Congressman ARRINGTON have talked about term limits, and that is an area of potential agreement. Congressman ROONEY has talked about getting PAC money out of politics. Congressman WILL HURD has talked about cybersecurity and tech jobs.

So my view is that, in areas where we disagree, we should disagree with spirit and conviction, but that doesn’t mean that there won’t be areas where we can agree.

And on a personal note, Congressman FITZPATRICK represents the district where I was born and where my parents are, so I have to be civil, certainly, to him and the other side.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. CRIST).

Mr. CRIST. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this important document as well.

Friends, we may have vastly different views on how best to create a more perfect Union, along with different styles and different temperaments, but we all share a commitment and, frankly, a responsibility to bring the voice of the people to Washington, D.C.

I am honored to represent much of Pinellas County and my hometown of St. Petersburg, Florida, and I promise to fight for the needs of my home. But I pledge to do so in keeping with what is known as the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have done unto you. This is a rule that I strive to live by every single day.

Poll after poll shows that Floridians and, frankly, all Americans are fed up with the divisiveness and rancor of Washington. As we move forward debating the issues of the day, let us be

mindful of the words of President Abraham Lincoln: “Though passions may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection.”

□ 1730

I am proud that our freshman class—yes, this awesome freshman class—has put forward its commitment to civility. It states that, despite our political differences, at the end of the day we must work together to move our country forward, putting people over politics and treating one another with mutual respect and much more grace even when we may disagree.

I thank, again, the gentleman from Louisiana and the gentlewoman from California for their leadership and for their friendship, putting people over politics. God bless you all, and God bless America.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK).

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all the members of the freshman class—members of both political parties and of every political background—who have joined us tonight in signing the commitment to civility pledge: love thy neighbor, no exceptions. Seeing 46 Republicans and Democrats make this public commitment is encouraging for this Chamber and for the constituents that we serve.

We can all agree that our Nation is facing some serious challenges. From increasing opportunity in an evolving economy to keeping our families safe from threats at home and abroad, the list in front of this body is heavy enough, and the last thing we need is to make that problem-solving even tougher. A statement made on the Senate floor last week offered a stark message: it is simply not possible to exist as a nation when half of its citizens hate the other half. If we are willing to end friendships or block our family members because of Facebook posts, we are not heading in the right direction.

Despite the incredible responsibility entrusted to each of us by those whom we represent, this Congress has not been immune to the hardening of political division. However, we must not accept our current discourse as the new normal.

Yet there is hope. There is hope because the Members standing with me tonight and those who have joined our pledge are willing to say, first and foremost, we are Americans, and the person I may disagree with—even vehemently—is still an American. Just because someone has different viewpoints or policy priorities or a different letter next to their name does not make them our enemy.

This Congress can and must play a part in restoring the civility and respect that makes productive dialogue possible. I am not saying we’ll agree on everything, but a spirit of mutual understanding, mutual respect, and mutual cooperation is the bedrock for

making our government and our communities work.

Whether we are elected officials, moms, dads, neighbors, community leaders, students—or anyone—we must remember that there is more that unites us than divides us. That is a commitment I am willing to make my colleagues and constituents this evening.

Again, I want to thank my colleagues, the gentleman from Louisiana and the gentlewoman from California, for all their work. I look forward to working with our awesome freshman class going forward.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I thank all these colleagues. We were anticipating remarks from Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas, Mr. COMER of Kentucky, Mr. RASKIN of Maryland, and Mr. LAWSON of Florida, but their schedules have suddenly taken them away this evening.

Mr. Speaker, I will close.

As you can see, our commitment to civility is sincere and important to each of us and, we believe, to the Congress and to our country. As we said at the outset here, there may never have been a more important time for a commitment like this. Perhaps it is appropriate that our hour happened to be assigned here on this Valentine’s Day.

I am reminded, as I close, of the biblical admonition given to us in Philippians, Chapter 2, Verses 3 through 4. It reads as follows: “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility, value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”

Mr. Speaker, if we can do these things, we will do well by our exceptional Nation.

I thank all of my esteemed colleagues for participating tonight and all those who signed this commitment.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

RESIGNATION OF MICHAEL FLYNN AND RUSSIAN INFLUENCE

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, the resignation of President Trump’s national security adviser, Michael Flynn, is the third Trump senior adviser to resign amid allegation of ties to Russia and the Kremlin. Two others were attached to the Trump campaign: his manager, Paul Manafort, and Russian energy adviser, Carter Page.

Meanwhile, Russia’s Putin is the same KGB thug he always has been, continuing to invade countries in eastern and central Europe and propagating a war in Syria as well as a bloody war against Ukraine.

The American people deserve to know the full extent of Russia’s financial, personal, and political grip on the Trump administration, and Congress